

I covered the final weeks of the Vietnam War as a correspondent for the *Chicago Tribune*, and, as most of you know, I fought in it with the U.S. Marine Corps in 1965 and 1966. Tonight, I'm going to talk about my memoir of Vietnam, *A Rumor of War*, and about Vietnam's legacy—the lasting effects it's had on our society and culture. But I want you to understand that I'm no dispassionate historian. For me, the war has been and always will be a deeply personal, emotional experience. In fact, it was the most important thing that ever happened to me. Like thousands of veterans, I underwent a kind of death and re-birth in the rice-paddies and jungles. Sixteen of my comrades were not so lucky—their names are now etched on that stark, black-granite wall in Washington. Whenever I recall those names and the faces that went with them, I'm reminded of the words a French officer spoke years after the armistice ending World War One: "The war, old boy, is our youth, secret and interred."

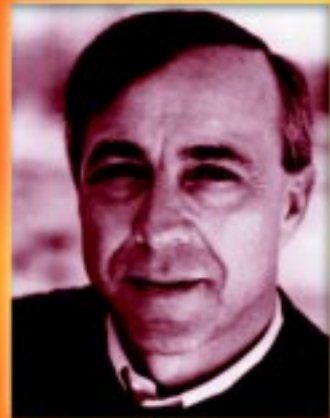
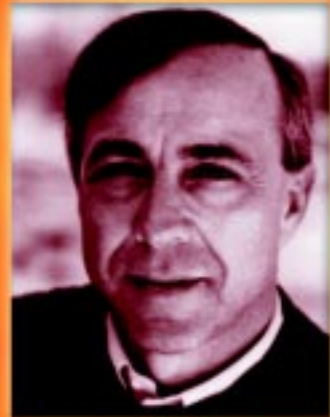
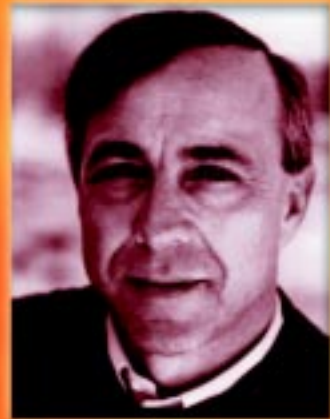
— Philip Caputo, p. 19

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